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**A Private Beach,
& a Princely Bure
*You Beside Me***

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FELIPE, TOM CRUISE, STEVE JOBS, GEORGE LUCAS, NICOLE KIDMAN,
AND PARIS HILTON (FOR STARTERS) HAVE IN COMMON? THEY'VE ALL
SPENT TIME ON A SUSTAINABLY CONCEIVED, MAXIMALLY SECLUDED,
SOUL-INFUSED SINGLE-RESORT ISLAND IN FIJI. TAKING THE
HINT, DAVID MICHAELIS AND BRIDE WING IT TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC

+ SIX MORE ONE-RESORT FIJIAN ISLANDS WE LOVE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROB HOWARD



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From this beach on Matamanoa, you can see the islands where *Cast Away* was filmed. Fiji is a long way to go—but there's arguably no better way to disconnect.



THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF SECOND honeymoon. One is for the veteran couple escaping kids, careers, BlackBerrys, and/or marital woes to rediscover for the first time in years the real meaning of being alone together. Call that one Honeymoon 2.0. The other is for a second marriage, a whole new beginning, a Shawshank redemption (the fantasy beach, the happiest of happy endings), but I dubbed ours Honeymoon II, not just because *Godfather II*, a personal favorite, is the rare sequel that proved to be greater than the original but because picking the right place for Honeymoon II meant not coinciding at any point with HM I—a tall order, since Nan and I, newly remarried after painful but amicable divorces, had both honeymooned quite happily the first time around, she in North Africa, I in Europe. ¶ My travel agent knew of an island in Fiji where couples never stop holding hands—the Wakaya Club & Spa, a little slice of paradise carved

out of a former coconut plantation on a privately owned island at the opposite side of the globe. And from then on, everything fell into place.



FROM LOS ANGELES, NAN AND I FLEW WESTWARD over the wide Pacific in the last hours of October 20. By the time we arrived in Fiji, nearly fourteen hours later, it was six o'clock in the morning, October 22. We had lost a day—not, you might think, the best strategy for a week's honeymoon. But, having crossed the International Date Line and landed at Nadi's remote international airport and reset our watches to overleap that nonexistent yesterday, we were now together on the clock of our own time.

In the cool predawn dark, we emerged from the great white 747, its snowy hump a twenty-first-century echo of Melville's voyages in the South Seas. Ragged sugarcane fields sprawled low toward the horizon. The fresh air carried a tang of something burning.

Our plane to Wakaya was a 2005 Cessna Grand Caravan, its sides striped green, crimson, and mustard. Swank enough for the Rolling Stones, but we alone commanded its nine seats. The pilot seemed unfazed to find just us back there, and off we went, up and away over the steep forested mountains of Viti Levu, Fiji's main island, where emerald slopes plunge directly into a turquoise sea.

Twin flagstaffs snapped with the colors of Fiji and of Wakaya in the newly risen sun alongside the island's private airstrip. A friendly assistant manager awaited us, our luggage was swiftly transferred to a Land Cruiser, and we rode to the resort along unpaved roads. Peregrine falcons soared overhead. The soft warm air was heavy with salt and frangipani.

Wakaya is a three-and-a-half-square-mile chunk of lush green forest edged by white sand beaches, steep basalt cliffs, sapphire lagoons, and exquisitely unharmed coral reefs. The resort, tucked into the northwest angle of the lee shore, musters just ten lagoon-facing bures, which were originally conceived as a sort of extended guest property to the twelve-thousand-square-foot villa, Vale O, or "House in the Clouds," built high on the northernmost headland as a faraway home for the international entrepreneur David Gilmour and his wife, Jill. The Gilmours have now completed work on an even more extensive private homestead on the bay, leaving Vale O and the leeward bures open to guests fluent enough in Western elegance, Eastern simplicity, and expensive honeymooning to fulfill David Gilmour's purest wish—that you "recapture sensitivity for time and space" during your stay.

Joseph Conrad, Somerset Maugham, or Ken Auletta could

THE KORO SEA ROLLED UP TO THE REEF, THRASHED OVER THE CORAL, PUFFING OUT SPUME LIKE A WHALE, THEN SETTLED QUIETLY INTO THE WIDE LAGOON

write a masterpiece from the life of David Harrison Gilmour, the statesmanly Canadian merchant prince of Manhattan, Palm Beach, and Fiji. Co-founder of Barrick Gold, the largest gold-mining enterprise in the world, and the TrizecHahn global real estate empire, Gilmour established himself locally as a partner of the South Pacific Hotel Corporation, which had become the biggest hotel chain in the South Pacific when he sold it in 1979. Since then, he has founded Fiji Water, the square-bottled global hydrator, selling it in 2004, when it was the second-most-popular imported bottled water in the United States. In the forty years since he first set foot in Fiji, Gilmour has given back to the islands through extensive philanthropic programs, sinking \$75 million of his own fortune into Wakaya and \$300 million into the islands overall, making him the single biggest private investor in the country's history.

Gilmour first glimpsed this unspoiled dot on the blue breast of the world while helicoptering over Wakaya in 1970. His South Pacific Hotel Corporation bought the island for one million dollars, but during the mid-'70s energy crisis, international airlines dropped most Fiji flights and the property languished. In December 1983, terribly worse: Five days before Christmas, Gilmour's beautiful, talented daughter, Erin, was brutally murdered in her apartment in Toronto. She was twenty-two. In the aftermath of the unsolved killing, Gilmour took stock of his life and rededicated himself to a transformed vision of respectful tourism. Using three million dollars of his own money, he became not just Wakaya's sole owner but its conscience and guide in reinventing a Pacific paradise of singular harmony.

Before the tragedy, his South Pacific Hotel construction crews had Trumped the native world with marble and gilt. Now Gilmour and his wife took pains to build in native materials: local wood, coral, bamboo, braided coconut-husk fibers. They researched old bure forms and raised a village for the seventy-two families of the island's workers, some three hundred people altogether, centering the community around an impressive red-roofed church whose stained glass windows are a memorial to Erin Gilmour, a smartly designed primary school, and, more recently, a village meeting hall.

In 1990, Gilmour opened the Wakaya Club as "really just a place where my friends, those I can't put up in my own home, can come and share the peace. . . . I don't see it as terribly commercial, frankly. It will probably only break even." Guests over the years have included Bill and Melinda Gates, Steve Jobs, Rupert Murdoch, George Lucas, Michelle Pfeiffer and David E. Kelley, Keith Richards (who famously tumbled from a coconut tree), Robert Zemeckis (who shot *Cast Away* on another Fijian island), Paris Hilton, Spanish crown prince Felipe (who honeymooned in Vale O), and Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.



THE ROADWAY WOUND PAST LOOKOUT POINTS where tropical jungle framed N. C. Wyeth murals of cerulean skies and indigo seas overheaped with pale-gold cloud cities. In the foreground, the forest floor was brown and sere—our driver explained that wild pigs strip the undergrowth. But the flora instantly became lush and green as we passed from primeval wood-

Wayaka's Lalai picnic on Tuburua Beach comes with freshly grilled langoustines, chilled Taittinger, and the assurance that "no one will appear for the rest of the day."



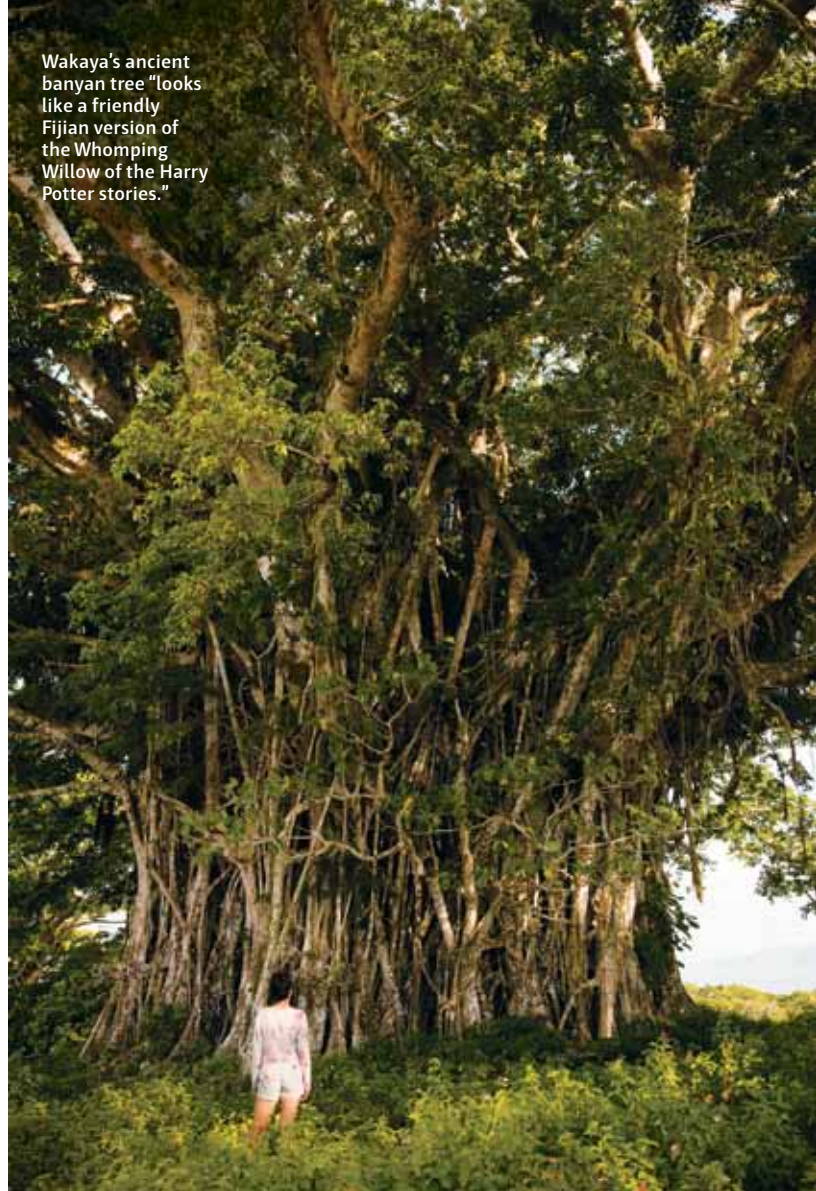
Fijian reefs, like here off Wakaya, are exquisitely unharmed. "The real pleasure was drifting omnisciently over a sunny underwater valley."



A Vatulele Island Resort staffer in Fijian warrior garb—hmm. (What's your view of this practice? Tell us on [facebook.com/CondéNastTravelMagazine](https://www.facebook.com/CondéNastTravelMagazine).)



Wakaya's ancient banyan tree "looks like a friendly Fijian version of the Whomping Willow of the Harry Potter stories."



land onto the grounds of Wakaya—an entry, if there ever was one, into Eden. The former copra plantation, its coconut palms in stately tapering colonnades, looked like a part of the antebellum South that had somehow carried off a transcontinental secession from the Carolina coast.

In the reception bure, framed nineteenth-century lithographs and maps hung on the woven palmetto walls. Good books stood in varnished built-in bookcases. Lamplight pooled every armchair. Sisal rugs lay upon the rare-wood floors. We were handed tall welcome drinks and invited to relax. There was no check-in to speak of, and it was this invitation to sit around in a well-chosen library and relax upon arrival that signified that we had landed far from the cavalcade of almost compulsive kite-boarding, paragliding, and Jet Skiing which characterizes the more packaged resorts strewn over Fiji's hundred-plus other inhabited islands.

Our ocean-view bure, Evuevu, named for a Fijian tree, felt like the hideaway of a smart, well-read diplomatic couple. There are two higher-end accommodations, the Governor's and Ambassador's bures, the latter a lordly 4,500-square-foot spread with private spas for two couples, but our palatial 1,650-square-foot Evuevu had everything we needed, and more. On the covered front veranda, a pair of his and hers Shady Brady straw hats hung from wooden pegs, not to mention an umbrella, chairs,

beach towels, and a foot shower for when our feet came back breaded by the fine white sand. Once we'd been fitted with masks, snorkels, and fins, these too lived out on the veranda. A spherical clay jug had our names chalked onto it, so beautifully and simply that it lacked any touch of cheesy personalization.

Between the verandas front and back lay two rooms—a living room with a bar and sitting area, and a big bedroom with massive closets—neither of which had phone or television, only books we wanted to read and softly lit Balinese paintings. The walls were covered in woven palmetto, the floors yaka timber. The firm four-poster king bed was softened with the finest Fili D'Oro Italian linens and cushy pillows, and in the vast bathroom, double vanities were separated by a huge glass door that opened into an airy outdoor shower—a large U-shaped enclosure walled with round black volcanic rocks. Overhead, a mesh mosquito net hung beneath blossoms, fronds, birds, and breezes. Boy, I—we—loved that shower.

In the bedroom, louvered panels below picture windows circulated sea air, as a fan turned beneath the spacious dark-wood high ceiling. Two air-conditioners stood by—but we never used them, preferring the constant breeze, the ever-shifting qualities of wind and wave, the creaking and clacking of the palm trees.

That first afternoon was mercifully overcast, the lagoon a



The author's bure did not have the full spa of the Ambassador's Bure (here), but the outdoor shower... "boy, I—we—loved that shower."



Nature reigns on Wakaya. This fellow (a Fiji banded iguana) was in the dining room. Every night the frogs come out in force.

placid pewter basin. Massive dark clouds threw shadows on the beach. Joe Vuadrieu, the jovial activities coordinator, whom we got to know right away, worried a little that all the dark and shadow on the sea might give us the wrong idea, and explained how things looked on brighter days. "You don't mind?" he asked.

Less than half a mile offshore, the Koro Sea rolled up to the reef, thrashed over the coral, puffing out spume like a whale, then settled quietly into the wide lagoon. Alternately, the reef registered as a faraway soughing presence, a great force subdued and suspended; or, under another wind, eerily close by, as if a roaring waterfall, having something to confide, had dropped its torrent to a trickle.

From twin chaises by our seawall, we took in the reef as a creamy-white line against the bright green and blue of the Pacific; the sort of constant you could hang whole lives on.



THE FIRST MORNING, NAN WOKE UP EARLY AND resettled herself outdoors in the hammock slung between two coconut palms shading a manicured lawn between the ocean

breakwall and our bure. I emerged from heavy slumber a while later and joined her with a lightweight blanket to make good on a honeymoon promise. That morning, and for the next three, as lorikeets darted overhead in pairs, flashing their bright red, blue, yellow, and green plumage among the palm fronds, I read *The Great Gatsby* to my bride, who had somehow missed it in ninth-grade English.

Breakfast for two was served in a thatched gazebo overlooking the lagoon. Inverted wishbone trellising lashed to the railings and a bamboo-strutted ceiling made it feel like a furnished outdoor room, although it was actually an extension of Wakaya's leaf-canopied main terrace, behind which stands the club's restaurant, with its soaring thatched roof, its pillars and beams encircled with patterns of coir braid, and a waitstaff who serve in this great Fijian temple of food as much with their hearts as with their hands.

Fresh orchids lay atop our napkins. Each morning, a plate of sliced fresh fruit, a basket of warm, freshly baked breads, and a ramekin of cool, sweet butter were also waiting. Juice was a chilled elixir of tropical fruits, not just made new and fresh from the garden but each morning a new blend. A trio of tiny jam pots each day supplied three new flavors, from peachy mango marmalade to grapefruit-honey guava jelly.

**THERE WERE SO MANY POSSIBILITIES FOR LANGUOR
ON OUR UNTOUCHED BEACH THAT IT WAS
HARD TO KNOW WHERE TO BE LANGUID FIRST.
THE LAGOON RIPPLED AND HISSED.
THE AFTERNOON OPENED OUT ENDLESSLY**



On Turtle Island, dinner is served at a different spot each evening. "We're not foodies," Michaelis writes, "but every meal at Wakaya is food tasted for the first time."

Our breakfast favorite was the smoked salmon, creamed eggs, and brioche; we're not foodies, but every meal at Wakaya is food tasted for the first time (and never a bill to sign—the cost is included in the room rate). In the kitchen, four Fijian chefs and two pastry chefs work alongside the occasional visiting celebrity, like Nobu Matsuhisa or Charlie Trotter, to produce highly imaginative and sophisticated menus from locally raised venison and pork, fish and shellfish from the Koro Sea, and organic herbs, vegetables, flavorful microgreens (smaller than baby lettuces, bigger than sprouts), and ripe fruits from Wakaya's kitchen garden.

We had heard much about Wakaya's princely six-to-one staff-to-guest ratio. At first, it actually seemed the reverse: There were just two other couples when we arrived, and since wherever we went, our arrival had always been anticipated, it seemed as if there must be one hyper-alert super staffer, some kind of post-colonial Admirable Crichton, invisibly making all things happen just for us. In fact, what Wakaya does expertly and in the most understanding way is to let you have your cake—of the highest possible quality, prepared to your instructions, unobtrusively presented—and eat it, too, while never allowing you to feel flagrantly spoiled.

Our first morning, Joe smoothed out the schedule so that we could go on one of Wakaya's justly famed Lailai picnics. Loading us into a Land Cruiser, Joe sped us off to the south end of the island, emerging from the forest onto a deserted but welcoming stretch of sand called Tuburua Beach, hung a black sun-shower bag in a long, low tree, and was gone, leaving us with two picnic coolers, a radio, and perfectly borne out assurances that no one would appear for the rest of the day, or until we radioed that we were ready to be picked up.

Going over to test the shower, I noticed the tree. A hammock was strung in its seaside branches. This was the hammock at the end of the world, the final hammock, the sailor's cradle in which to reflect on life; and slung between boughs so low and beautiful and inviting that I later asked the driver who picked us up what kind of tree this might be. It turned out to be the famous "coconut tree" that Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards had fallen out of, landing on his head and suffering a blood clot in the brain. Keith and guitarist Ronnie Wood, so the story went, had been trying to climb the tree for coconuts, but there were no coconuts in this low bough, four feet off the sand, as Groucho Marx would have been the first to notice.

There were so many possibilities for languor on our untouched beach that it was hard to know where to be languid first. A twenty-foot-high thatched umbrella cast its huge circumference of shade over twin pillowed chaises. Onto an elegant

wooden table under a shady tree, we eventually unpacked our picnic, a feast of freshly grilled langoustine and a microgreens-laced garden salad, with a bird-of-paradise arrangement for the table. Chilled Taittinger clinked in a bucket. The lagoon rippled and hissed. The afternoon opened out endlessly. And there was my beautiful wife in a sarong.

A HONEYMOON IS THE PRESCHOOL OF MARRIAGE.

You get to color and make happy faces and practice everything that you are going to do for keeps at home by playing and touching here. We are all primitive geniuses in our first days alone together, and Wakaya is the Montessori of honeymooning. Whatever you want to do—read, play nine holes, go out on a boat and snorkel the reef, play croquet, hit some tennis balls, fly-fish, hike to ancient ruins, climb a craggy peak, or spend another undisturbed day at yet another pristine beach—you can do, however and whenever you feel like it and at whatever level you want: It's all self-directed.

This kind of pure aristocratic independence is Wakaya's watermark: no court reservations, no tee times, no monkeying around with pros or other guests who think they're the pro. We just went over to the golf pavilion, and there in a nice neat line stood bags of clubs, tees, balls, and beyond them nine wide-open fairways waiting for us. Same at the tennis court: racquets, balls, towels, and the inevitable paired bottles of Fiji Water. To quote a love poem an artist friend once drew for his fiancée, everything at Wakaya was *all hours, all ours*.

Our first favorite Montessori-ish activity was shelling. Then came snorkeling, to which we got addicted. Along about the third day, during a picnic alone on the long white beach of Homestead Bay, we discovered that we could do both at the same time, and that was the beginning of our real life in paradise.

We started spending whole chunks of afternoons lolling around in Loofaland, as Nan dubbed the submerged landscape of gargantuan coral forms we came upon with astonished delight during our first immersion. We were both beginners, but Nan, once she got the hang of it, soon became leader of the Cous-teau Society, heading out sixty or seventy yards offshore, where vast ledges of coral climbed into scalloped peaks out of great blue depths, leading us through wide sunny valleys clouded by masses of tiny, sharply outlined, radiantly blue and yellow fish.

Endless varieties of psychedelic fish popped into view; and among the coral, Yellow Submarine-sized flowers and kelp and matte-black *bêches de mer*. On one boat excursion in the banded sapphire water—navy beyond aqua beyond cerulean—we swam alongside a school of barracuda. And each of us separate-



A hawkbill turtle shell off (you guessed it) Turtle Island.

WHATEVER YOU WANT TO DO, YOU CAN DO, HOWEVER AND WHENEVER YOU FEEL LIKE IT. THIS PURE ARISTOCRATIC INDEPENDENCE IS WAKAYA'S WATERMARK: NO COURT RESERVATIONS, TEE TIMES, OR MONKEYING AROUND WITH PROS

The Blue Yonder

WEDDING VEIL—WHITE BEACHES, DAZZLING LAGOONS, VAST BLUE OCEAN. . . PARADISE? NO. JUST FIJI, WHERE NEWLYWEDS ARE EQUALED IN NUMBER ONLY BY DIVERS ARRIVING TO STUDY (OR JUST ENJOY) THE EXTRAORDINARY SEA LIFE. HERE, BOB PAYNE RECOMMENDS EIGHT OF FIJI'S BEST DIVE SITES AND SEVEN OF OUR FAVORITE ONE-RESORT ISLANDS, INCLUDING WAKAYA (679-3448-128; BURES, \$1,900–\$2,400)



LAUCALA ISLAND

Publisher Malcolm Forbes, who once owned this island, liked it so much that he is buried here. For shorter stays, expect to find every luxury—including a glass-walled lap pool, an 18-hole golf course, and 25 very private villas, each with its own pool (888-0077; doubles, \$3,800).

NUKUBATI ISLAND

The most authentic Fijian experience is here, a few minutes' boat ride off isolated northern Vanua Levu. A Fijian-owned and -managed resort, Nukubati operates entirely off any grid, which allows a welcome vacation from air-conditioning in favor of the reliable ocean breezes in one of the seven strategically positioned bures (603-0919; doubles, \$710–\$860).

TURTLE ISLAND

Now 30 years old, the 14-room Turtle Island, can claim to be the original Eden among Fiji's swank one-resort islands. Adam and Eve continue to arrive in the form of honeymooners, who love this idyllic isle scalloped with secluded white beaches. Evening dining is communal, lest you forget the rest of the world exists (800-255-4347; doubles, \$690).

MATANGI ISLAND

You'll feel like a long-lost cousin here, learning to gather seafood from the shallows or going to Sunday church with the staff. It's Fijian-owned and powered by solar panels and wind generators, and all seven bures are beachfront, positioned to take advantage of the breezes (888-0260; doubles, \$610–\$900).

MATAMANOA ISLAND

Tying-the-knot war stories are shared by the honeymooners who book one of the 20 bures, relatively inexpensive by Fijian standards. The beach is among the best in the Mamanucas, with (late sleepers take note) half the bures facing the sunrise and the other half the sunset (672-3620; doubles, \$360).

VATULELE ISLAND

The seaplane stops and you wade ashore, onto a perfect white beach where each of the 19 bures has its own secluded swath of sand. If you can lure yourself away from the spare but seductive bure, where you can go barefoot from terrace to lagoon, Vatulele delivers reality too—several villages where Fijians farm coconuts and taro (672-0300; doubles, \$1,215–\$1,465).

ly confronted huge monsters: in my case, a goliath grouper; for Nan, a couple of manta rays. The real pleasure was drifting omnisciently over a sunny underwater valley, or finning slowly above a ledge, or just hanging suspended together in what amounted to the biggest dentist's-office fish tank you ever dreamed of. Finally, as we lingered in the shallow water on the next to last day, we just became part of the tide, floating facedown like drowned bodies in shallower and shallower water, as we closed upon the tiniest of shells.

We twice ended the day at the Breeze Spa, where on each visit we were greeted with immense kindness and then walked over a small hand-wrought bridge to the entrance, where two seats and two foot basins awaited us. It was the only reservation we ever had to make. For three hours the whole spa was ours. Each of us was massaged for an hour, followed by a long soak in the iridescent-tiled serenity pool, which overlooked the lagoon from a lanai in which a large reclining Buddha at the pool's edge made it feel like a sheltered pond in a private palace. And finally, at sunset, a bottle of champagne and dinner on the lanai.

SOUTH SEAS NIGHTFALL HAS a quality unlike that of any other place I've been. There is no twilight. The sun gone down fades to black, skipping dusk altogether. Then almost instantaneously all the stars break out—stark, wondrous, their innumerable faint gleams sprinkling the silent, clear lagoon. I've never liked the coming of night upon tourist places, once suffering an intense desolation as sunset plunged the Amalfi Coast into dusk. The coming of night at Wakaya drenched us in peace. The reef's whisper mingled with starshine to give the South Sea night what Melville called "a silvery silence, not a solitude."

Moonrise also went to the heart. The dreads that haunted nineteenth-century sailors—shipwreck, marooning, bones scattered in some greasy feast—must have been salvaged by the South Sea moon. The Edwardian English poet Rupert Brooke got it almost right: "Fiji in moonlight is like nothing else in this world, or the next. It's all dim colours and all scents."

And frogs.

We found the frogs because of our passion for old movies and our evenings in Rumu Lagilagi—Wakaya's "recreation bure," only that's like calling San Simeon a beach house. This was one of those aspects of the Wakaya experience that made us feel like honored guests of a remarkably hospitable couple, for at our disposal was an exquisitely decorated cathedral-ceilinged club room furnished with an antique pool table and a well-stocked teak bar, the walls adorned and lit, gallery style, with a seriously extensive private collection of early maps of the Fiji Islands, lithographs, and mother-of-pearl-inlaid Fijian weapons, much of it acquired by David and Jill Gilmour at Sotheby's or Christie's—Ralph Lauren could spend his life trying to get that club room copied right.

When we further discovered that we could order from the restaurant's evening menu and wine list—having our lobster and scallop ravioli starters, the suckling pig accompanied by mango chutney and roast kumara, washed down with Australian shiraz, and finished by banana soufflé with pineapple compote and vanilla ice cream, all served on an oversized carved coffee table—

we ended up spending practically every night there, eating and watching old movies on a home-entertainment system.

The first evening of the frogs was uncommonly dark, and I carried a flashlight from the bure to our specially set up screening dinner. The lawn was dewless, the footing dry and smooth, and as Nan and I walked along, deep in our South Seas bliss, our reaction to every sight was Siamese: "The sky!" we exclaimed. "The stars!" And suddenly, underfoot, "Frogs?"

Strange, silent, brown batrachians, fat as meatballs, sat staring into my flashlight. A quick flick of the beam revealed that a whole croak of these frogs had overrun the lawn, blocking our retreat. Nan gasped, and I loved her for that—I had just let out a blood-curdling yell. She liked the frogs, sort of. "I love their earnest Ernest Borgnine faces," she said.

They were actually harmless, and all they were doing was eating the bugs. But they came out every night in force, like a ragtag army of left-behind World War II Marines turned into frogs by the spell of some Tokyo witch.

FAST AWAY THE HONEYMOON PASSES. WE hardly noticed. Morning after morning, the first sun in the world's latest day roused our fellow South Sea islanders, but not us. We never did see a dawn in Fiji.

The last night, the staff wove palm fronds around the gazebo railings, topping them with clipped bougainvillea, and put out the really excellent champagne sent by our travel agent in a silver bucket. Some of the men sat on mats nearby, playing ukuleles and singing old Pacific songs that alternated between breezy airs and ominous ballads. No other guests appeared. I wore a light linen jacket, Nan a long strappy silk dress printed with swirling tropical flowers. We ate. We danced. We took pictures. It was our own Paradise Prom Night, with an ours-only outdoor dance floor beyond which a new Bali Hai moon flattened itself into strokes of silver on the sea.

The morning of the day we left, the staff gathered as we finished breakfast. They formed into ranks, six-foot burly men in their calf-length *sulu* skirts and canoe-like leather sandals, the women with flowers behind their ears, everyone solemn, our special friends and favorites among the group flashing us lovely smiles as they sang a Fijian farewell, the old words mixing the feelings of all farewells. On our way to the airstrip, we passed all the things we hadn't done and seen—the *boules* court; a magical ancient banyan tree that looks like a friendly Fijian version of the Whomping Willow of the Harry Potter stories; Korolevu, an ancient village being excavated on the island's summit by UCLA archaeologists; and the long, grim plunge of the cliff called Chieftain's Leap.

On the tarmac, the pilot took a farewell snapshot of us before we boarded the plane for the long journey home, west to Nadi but ultimately east of Eden. The photograph shows us tanned and serene but strangely sad, almost stricken, like summer campers who are about to cry at having to leave. I can't say for certain that's how we really looked as we stood there waiting while various mailbags and pouches were stowed. Honeymooners may be among the most photographed couples in private life; even so, they don't really know how they look to others, and they don't need to. Innocence is the one quality you can fully regain in paradise when someone truly loves you. □